



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Candrea R. Cato

FORMER DETROIT RESIDENT SENTENCED FOR IDENTITY THEFT SCAM

A former resident of Detroit was sentenced today to 12 years imprisonment for organizing a scheme that used stolen identities and credit card information to defraud Western Union of almost one million dollars, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Desmond Scanlon, United States Secret Service.

Candrea R. Cato, 25, a former Detroit resident who was already serving a federal sentence for another offense, was sentenced by United States District Judge John Feikens.

Cato and ten other Michigan residents were named in a 106-count indictment returned in January, 2006. The indictment described a scheme whereby Cato and her co-conspirators telephoned people with primarily Asian-sounding names and pretended to be representatives from credit card companies. The conspirators, by claiming that an individual had been apprehended illegally using the telephoned person's credit card, would dupe people into disclosing credit card information and personal identifiers. The conspirators then used the stolen credit card information and personal identifiers to telephonically initiate and "pay" for

Western Union money transfers. More than a thousand credit card numbers were compromised over a two-year period, and Western Union suffered more than \$950,000 in losses. Cato pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy, wire fraud, bank fraud, credit card fraud, and aggravated identity theft on August 10, 2006. Following her term of imprisonment, Cato will be on supervised release for 3 years. Cato was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$951,099.12.

United States Attorney Murphy stated, "Identity theft is the crime that keeps on offending, as victims are left to pick up the pieces of their damaged credit over months or even years. This ID theft ring appeared to target a single ethnic group, which adds a degree of manipulation and connivance that is particularly odious. The court imposed an appropriate sentence for this conduct."

Previously sentenced for their roles in the scheme were:

- Debra L. Young, 50, of Detroit, to 72 months imprisonment, followed by 3 years supervised release, and \$951,099.12 restitution.
- Johnny Rutherford, 22, of Taylor, to 42 months imprisonment, followed by 2 years supervised release, and \$67,804 restitution.
- Latina A. Thomas, 28, of Detroit, to 42 months imprisonment, followed by two years supervised release, and \$113,160 restitution.
- Antonio L. Cranford, 21, of Southfield, to 5 months imprisonment, followed by two years supervised release with the first 150-days being served in home confinement, and \$38,654 restitution.

Awaiting sentencing are: Wesley L. Layton, 20, of Detroit; April S. Anderson, 22, of Highland Park; and Jamicka Price, 21, of Detroit.

Freddie L. Jones, Jr., 23, of Detroit, is scheduled to enter a guilty plea on December 12, 2006.

Tonya L. Moore, 30, and Lakesha D. Thomas, 20, both of Detroit, are awaiting trial.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service, with assistance from the Department of Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Stephen T. Robinson.